

## GOVERNMENT REPORTS

### Methods Employed By Department in Getting a Line on Tobacco Crop.

The great improvement recently noted in the accuracy and reliability of the crop reports of the Bureau of Statistics of the Department of Agriculture, especially with reference to leaf tobacco, lends a special interest to a statement about to be issued by the Department outlining the methods employed in securing and compiling the data upon which the final official figures are based.

The data used in the preparation of the monthly reports are obtained through a special field service and corps of State statistical agents and a large body of voluntary correspondents covering counties, townships and individual farms.

#### Seventeen Agents.

The special field service consists of seventeen traveling agents, each assigned to report for a separate group of States. These agents are specially qualified by statistical training and practical knowledge of crops. They systematically travel over the districts assigned to them, carefully note the development of each crop, keep in touch with best-informed opinion, and render written and telegraphic reports monthly and at such other times as required.

#### Reports For State.

There are forty-five State statistical agents, each of whom reports for his own State and maintains a corps of correspondents entirely independent of those reporting directly to the Department at Washington. These correspondents report each month directly to the State agent. These reports are then tabulated and weighed according to the relative products or area of the given crop in each county represented and are summarized by the State agent.

There are approximately 2,800 counties of agricultural importance in the United States, in each of which the Department has a principal county correspondent who maintains an organization of several assistants.

The reports of the county correspondents are forwarded directly to the Department at Washington. In a similar manner, in the townships and voting precincts in which farming operations are extensively carried on, special correspondents are maintained who also report directly to the Department. Finally, at the end of the growing season, a large number of individual farmers report on the results of their own operations during the year.

#### First Tobacco Report.

The first tobacco crop report is prepared June 1, and shows the acreage and condition as observed on that date. The reports for July, August, September and October record the condition of the tobacco crop, while the November report includes the average yield per acre by States. In December a carefully corrected final summary is published, showing acreage, yield per acre, average price received by the grower, and total value of the crop.

At intervals during the summer the expert special agent having charge of the tobacco crop, prepares a summary of conditions by types. This feature of the reports has been found to be of great value, as it enables growers and the trade to differentiate accurately the production of different types where more than one variety is grown in a State.

#### Leaks in Department.

From time to time "leaks" have occurred in the Department by which special interests have received advance information concerning the condition of crops which has been used for speculative purposes. It is believed that the system recently adopted makes it impossible for anything of the kind to occur.

All of the reports from the State statistical agents, as well as those of the special field agents, are sent to the Secretary of Agriculture, in specially-prepared envelopes, addressed in red ink, with the letter "A" plainly marked on them. By an arrangement with the postal authorities these envelopes are delivered to the Secretary of Agriculture in sealed mail pouches. The pouches are opened only by the Secretary or Assistant Secretary, and the reports, with seals unbroken, are immediately placed in the safe in the Secretary's office, where they remain sealed until the morning of the day on which the Bureau report is issued, when they are delivered to the statistician by the Secretary or Assistant Secretary. The combination for opening the safe is known only to the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary. All telegraphic communications regarding crop reports are forwarded to the Secretary in cipher.

#### Final Estimates.

The work of making the final crop estimates each month culminates at sessions of the Crop Reporting Board, composed of five members,

presided over by the statistician. The personnel of the Board is changed each month. The meetings are held in the office of the statistician, which is kept locked during the sessions, no one being allowed to enter or leave the room or the Bureau, and all telephones being disconnected.

#### Board Assembles.

When the Board has assembled, the reports, which have been placed in the safe of the Secretary, are delivered by him, opened and tabulated, and the figures by States, from the several classes of correspondents and agents relating to all crops, are tabulated in convenient parallel columns. The Board is thus provided with several separate estimates, made independently by the respective classes of correspondents, and these are carefully compared and discussed by the Board and the final figures for each State decided upon.—Livingston.

### VAGARIES OF SOUND.

#### Acoustic Phenomena That Are Puzzling to Scientists.

At twilight some time ago at a life saving station of the English coast noises were heard that sounded like signal shots from some distance at sea. A boat was launched and sped with all possible energy to the place from which the sounds seemed to have come, but it returned without having heard or seen anything further. Yet the seaman who had been left behind on guard declared solemnly that in the meantime he had heard near shore unmistakable cries for help from drowning persons. The bluejackets themselves are most inclined to regard the whole matter as supernatural and the voices as spectral. Scientists say that it is possible, however, that such sounds may be audible in remarkable distinctness where there is a high coast, though they may come from a great distance, especially when persons there are placed accidentally so that behind them rises a wall which receives the sound and throws it back.

On some coasts that are often visited by fogs a legend of so called "fog shots" has acquired vogue. These are said to have their origin, for some reason not yet fathomed, within the masses of fog. Acoustic phenomena are found of such a strange kind that the investigation of them may be said to be still very far from conclusive. The most inexplicable secret lies perhaps not in the occurrence of sounds, the origin of which may be reached only with great difficulty, but in their disappearance and in absolute silence when audible noises should be expected. Many a ship has been wrecked because its signals of distress, loud and uninterrupted, have remained inaudible, although only a very short distance from the coast.

But, again, it happens that in such an instance the very same signals become audible at a far greater distance, where they provoke great excitement. A remarkable example of this was produced by the firing of guns by the English fleet in the roadstead at Spithead on Feb. 1, 1901, as a token of mourning for Queen Victoria. This was not heard at all by many persons close at hand who were listening for it, while at places much farther away it was heard plainly. The direction of the wind failed to explain this aberration of the waves of sound.—Chicago News.

### PEGGY'S ADVICE.

#### Why It Suddenly Changed From Excellent to Worthless.

It was the era of the first Quincy baby, and the attention of the entire Quincy family, consisting solely of mother and father, was directed to the proper upbringing of the infant. Books on babyhood were bought and digested. Suitable magazines were subscribed for. Friends and mothers were consulted on every point. But, to the wonder of the solicitous Mrs. Quincy declared that the advice that did the most good was that which appeared in the morning paper, signed with the fetching name "Peggy." But the time came when even that was discarded.

"Aren't you going to read me the little lesson from the Journal for today?" asked Mr. Quincy at the breakfast table.

"I shall never read that stuff to any one any more," said the mother firmly. "Why not? Only day before yesterday you were saying what excellent recommendations Peggy made about crying children. Why do you desert her?"

"I'll tell you, Tom," she said. "I had meant not to say a word about it, because it is so humiliating, but now you've spoken—well, I might as well confess. The paper yesterday said something I didn't quite understand, and, as I was downtown, I thought I'd just run into the office and ask Peggy what she meant. So I did. The office boy smiled when I asked for Peggy, but he took me up a lot of dirty stairs and then pointed to a door. I knocked, and a voice answered, 'Come in!'"

"Well?" queried her husband. "Well, there isn't any Peggy! Not a woman at all, but a perfectly horrid, grinning man, smoking a cigar! He writes that advice—a man! What do you think of that, Tom?"

Mrs. Quincy paused in her indignation.

"I thought you found the advice good, as a rule," he objected.

"Tom Quincy, how could a man in a newspaper office write good advice to mothers? I am surprised! You men think you know everything!"—Youth's Companion.

THE NEWS by carrier 45c a month.

### LIES ABOUT THE FEET.

#### A Shoe Clerk's Comments on His Customers' Peculiarities.

"I don't see why people always lie about their feet," said the shoe clerk as his customer departed after giving him a bad half hour. "I don't mean on the size of their foot, for it's only natural to wish to have, or, rather, to make other people think you have, small feet. But why a great, burly man with his feet nubby with bunions should insist that his shoes never trouble him and that he never has any trouble in getting a fit is beyond me. Why, if I put an ordinary shoe on such a man he would cuss with pain, and he knows it. He knows also that I have to hunt around until I find some freak shoe that will fit his misshapen old foot, but all the time he declares that he never has bunions or corns like most people. Women who seem to be sensible enough in all other ways come in here and declare that they do not know what a corn is, when they wince with pain every time I touch their little toe. When they are forced to declare that the shoe hurts in one spot or another they insist it is because their feet have a shape peculiarly their own. Sometimes they will admit they have a 'little calloused place,' but a corn, oh, dear, no! Sometimes in a thin, lightweight shoe I can fairly see the corns bunching out under the leather, but I have to say diplomatically that the fit is 'not good,' or that the customer has a 'peculiarly sensitive foot,' or some other nonsense, if I want to keep their trade."—New York Press.

### PUMPKIN PIE.

#### Praise For This Culinary Triumph and Gastronomic Delight.

American literature is replete with the praise of pie, and Harriet Beecher Stowe says, "The pie is an English institution, which, planted in American soil, forthwith ran rampant and burst forth into an untold variety of genera and species." The average American echoes, "Let it run." He has the same desire that possessed Simple Simon of Mother Goose fame when he met the pie man. But Mother Goose flourished before the pie reached the acme of its glory. The most famous pie of which she wrote was a meat pie, for she said:

Sing a song of sixpence, pocket full of rye;  
Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.  
When the pie was opened the birds began to sing.  
Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a king?

A pie containing live blackbirds sounds like a fairy tale, but it is not, as a Venetian publisher of a cookbook printed in 1569 gave a recipe for making pies "that the birds may be alive in them and fly out when it is cut up." The gay revelers who sat down before such a dish may have thought that the very pinnacle of culinary art had been obtained, but the pumpkin affords gastronomic delights to every American citizen beside which blackbird pies, ortolan pies, lombard pies or battalla pies are and of right ought to be back numbers.—Washington Star.

#### A Tart Retort.

A good story is told of a prominent society woman at Newport whose name cannot for obvious reasons be given here.

It appears that an extremely wealthy matron who has not always enjoyed her present social pre-eminence was making certain supercilious references as to a young girl who had been presented by the lady first mentioned. "By the way," languidly asked the wealthy matron, "who is your friend Miss Blank?"

"Miss Blank is a charming girl," was the smiling response, "well bred, as you see, accomplished, entertaining." "Oh, yes, of course," continued the other, "but, my dear Mrs. So-and-so, you know what I mean—who is she?" "My dear woman," retorted the first lady, "I can no more tell you who Miss Blank is than I could have informed those who asked me who you were when you first came to Newport."—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

#### Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Pompeii was buried in ashes and was easily disinterred, while Herculaneum received the full force of the crimson lava, which hardened rapidly to the consistency of marble and must be quarried in order to reach the city beneath. Owing to this difficulty only a small amount of excavating has been done in Herculaneum as compared with that which has taken place at Pompeii. In addition, another town sprang up on the lava above Herculaneum, which would have been endangered by the undermining necessary to exploration with pick and shovel.—New York American.

#### About Due.

A country woman residing near the town of Sligo, thinking her husband was rather late in coming home on Saturday with his pay, went to the police office to inquire if he was there. "Is Pat here?" she asked. "No," replied the constable, "but sit down. We're expecting him every minute."—London Opinion.

#### Hire an Expert.

If you want a thing well done, don't do it yourself in spite of what the proverb says. If you really want it well done hire an expert. If you try to do it yourself you are pretty sure to botch it.—Somerville Journal.

#### Exquisite Harmony.

Piper—the varra pest music I never heard whatever was down at Jamie Macclachlan's. There was fuffeen o' us pipers in the wee back parlor, all playin' different chunes. I thoct I was floatin' in heeven.—Punch.

### NERVES THAT TIRE QUICKLY

#### Those Directing Sense of Smell, and Heat and Cold, Are the Most Easily Fatigued.

The most easily tired nerves in the body are the nerves of smell. They can detect the faintest whiff of perfume.

As you pass a rose in the garden the quantity of perfume that gets into your nostrils must be many millions of billions of times smaller than the tiniest grain of sand. But rub the strongest perfume to your mustache, and in a few seconds you fail to notice it the nerve of smell is so quickly fatigued.

The heat nerves and cold nerves, which are quite distinct from the nerves of ordinary sensation, also stop working very quickly. A bath that seems quite hot when you first step into it very soon ceases to cause any particular feeling of heat.

Nerves of hearing and sight can go through an enormous amount of work. For 16 hours a day they work hard, and are still willing to do more.

The nerves of the heart are the most untiring of all. From the first dawn of life until the last gasp they work without stopping for one instant.

#### HE WAS WISE.



Summer Boarder—The boys are eating your green apples.

The Farmer—That's all right. Let them eat all they want. It'll keep 'em away from the table for the next two or three days, and I'll charge their daddies for the apples besides.

#### ALWAYS COMPENSATIONS.

"What time this morning did you get in?" she asked, sharply.

"As I got in the hall, the day broke," he answered, humbly.

"Well, you don't seem able to come in without breaking something," she said, reprovingly, "but I am glad it was the day that broke and not my handsome new lamp."

### A SUGARY AFRICAN FRUIT.

Consul Joseph I. Brittain of Prague quotes an Austrian journal which tells of a plant recently discovered in Africa, belonging to the family of leguminous plants, called Parkia biglobosa, which produces a fruit containing 25 per cent. saccharine and about 20 per cent. reducing sugar, and when ripe about 30 to 40 per cent. saccharine. If the percentage of sugar is correctly stated, the plant would take first rank among sugar producing plants. The extraction of the sugar from the fruit is said to be accompanied by no difficulties.

#### EASY FOR SHERLOCK.

The modern Sherlock climbed through the kitchen window.

"Ah!" exclaimed Sherlock, surveying the surroundings, "I find that his wife is away."

"And how long has she been away?" asked his assistant.

"Thirty days, exactly."

"How in the world can you tell?"

"By the unwashed dishes and saucers. There are 90 of each in all, which shows that he has used three each day for 30 days and left them for her to wash when she comes home. I guess I know something about married men keeping 'bachelors' hall.'"

#### TARRING OF ROADS.

Road tarring is becoming a habit in the automobile districts of England. The old method of applying with hand brushes is now being abandoned in favor of the use of an apparatus which is nothing more nor less than a giant air brush. The tar is in a large tank and two men pump air into it while a third goes about the road with a pipe having four outlets through which the air throws the tar in fine spray. This rapidly and thoroughly coats the road; sand is then sprinkled and the dust is laid for good.

#### THE ONLY SAFE WAY.

The great editor looked up impatiently.

"Boy," he said, "what is that rustling in the waste basket—a mouse?"

The boy, after examining the basket, answered:

"No, sir; it's one o' them poems o' passion throbbin'."

"Well, pour some water on it and then drop it out of the window," said the editor. "This building isn't insured."

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# Hot Soda

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